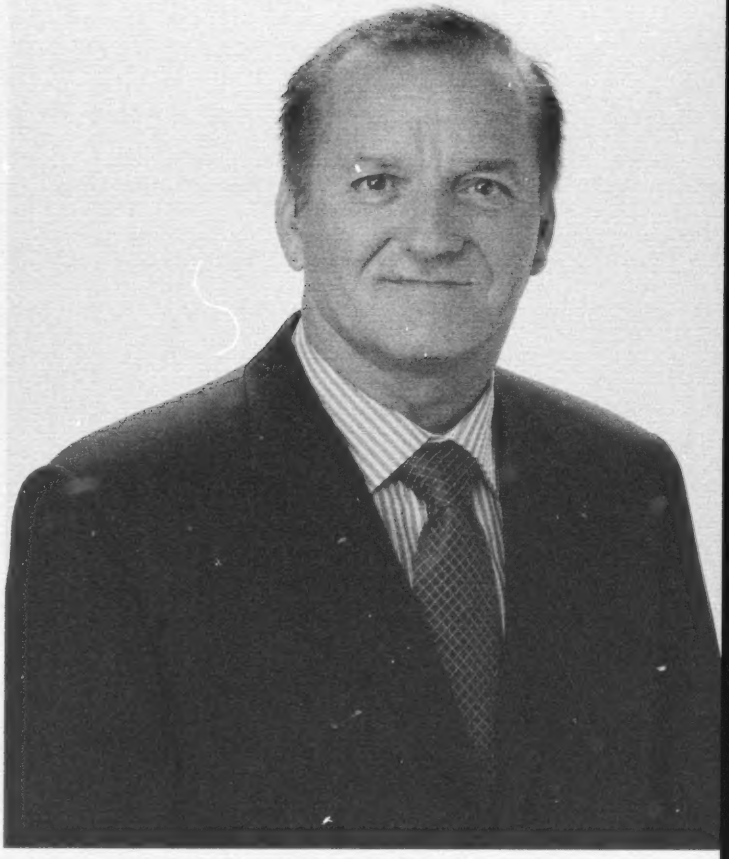
Department of
Advanced Education and Skills

2013 - 2014
ANNUAL REPORT

Newfoundland
Labrador

This page intentionally blank for double sided printing

Honourable Kevin O'Brien
Minister of Advanced Education and Skills
Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities
Minister Responsible for the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation
Member for Gander



Honourable Wade Verge, M.H.A
Speaker, House of Assembly

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I am pleased to submit the Annual Report for the Department of Advanced Education and Skills. This report is submitted in accordance with the department's obligation as a category one entity under the *Transparency and Accountability Act*. It was prepared under my direction and, as Minister, I am accountable for the results contained in it.

This annual report has two purposes - to focus on our performance over the last fiscal year and to describe progress over the last three years, as we have now successfully completed the 2011-2014 Strategic Plan.

2013-14 was marked by two key milestones: more people were working in the province than ever before and the number of individuals that required financial support through the Income Support program reached a historic low. The department played an important role in helping to transition people to the workforce through the provision of social supports, education and training, or employment supports.

As we move forward in 2014-15, we will begin to implement the department's new 2014-17 Strategic Plan. This plan focuses on aligning labour supply with demand, supporting a post-secondary education system that is responsive to labour market demand, and removing barriers to participation in the growing social and economic opportunities that the province has to offer. The departmental re-organization, announced at the end of 2013-14, will transform how the department serves citizens over the coming years. The result will be to ensure that programs and services are helping people become more independent, obtain employment and support our commitment to reduce poverty, improve literacy and foster inclusion.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kevin O'Brien

KEVIN O'BRIEN, MHA
MINISTER OF ADVANCED EDUCATION AND SKILLS

This page intentionally blank for double sided printing

growth through employment
strength in diversity
dignity by inclusion

Contents

i Message from the Minister

1 Departmental Overview

5 Shared Commitments

6 Highlights and Accomplishments

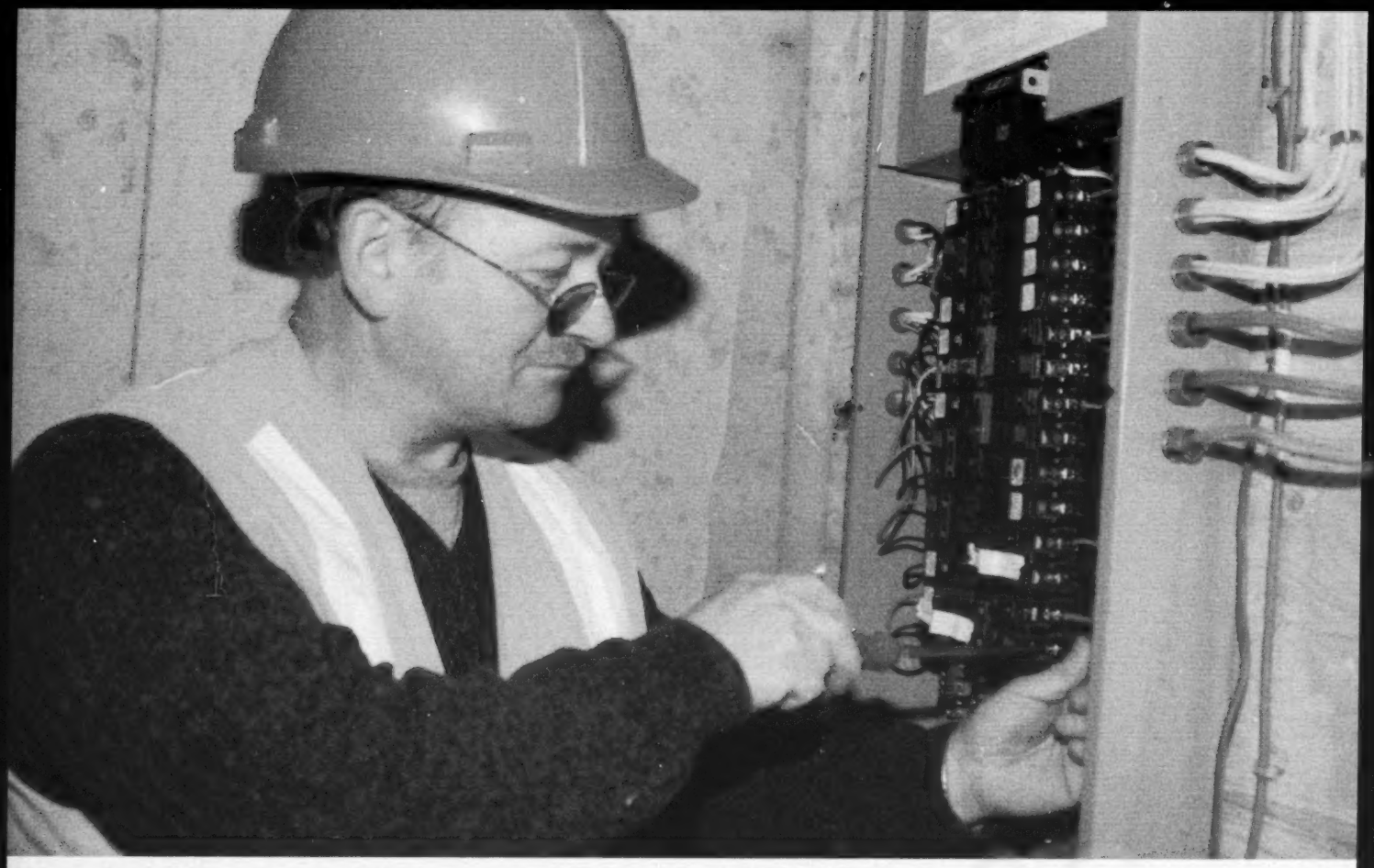
8 Report on Performance

28 Opportunities and Challenges

30 Financial Statements

33 Appendices

This page intentionally blank for double sided printing



Departmental Overview

The Department of Advanced Education and Skills plays a pivotal role in the province's social and economic fabric, through the delivery of a range of programs, services and strategies, as outlined in the mandate.

Vision

Growth through employment, strength in diversity, dignity by inclusion.

Mission

By 2017, the Department of Advanced Education and Skills will have improved the quality and the delivery of supports and services.

Mandate

The Department of Advanced Education and Skills helps citizens obtain the necessary educational, financial, and social supports to achieve the greatest benefit from the growing opportunities that exist in the province.

To ensure the province has skilled workers and highly educated graduates to support a fast-growing economy, the department works with employers, supports and collaborates with Memorial University and College of the North Atlantic and oversees the operations of private post-secondary institutions. Through the development and delivery of programs and supports, the department works to meet labour demands and increase labour force participation in the province, including under-represented groups such as: Aboriginal people, women, and people with disabilities.

The department leads government-wide strategies to reduce poverty, enhance the inclusion of persons with disabilities, promote immigration and multiculturalism, develop the provincial workforce and support sustained population growth.

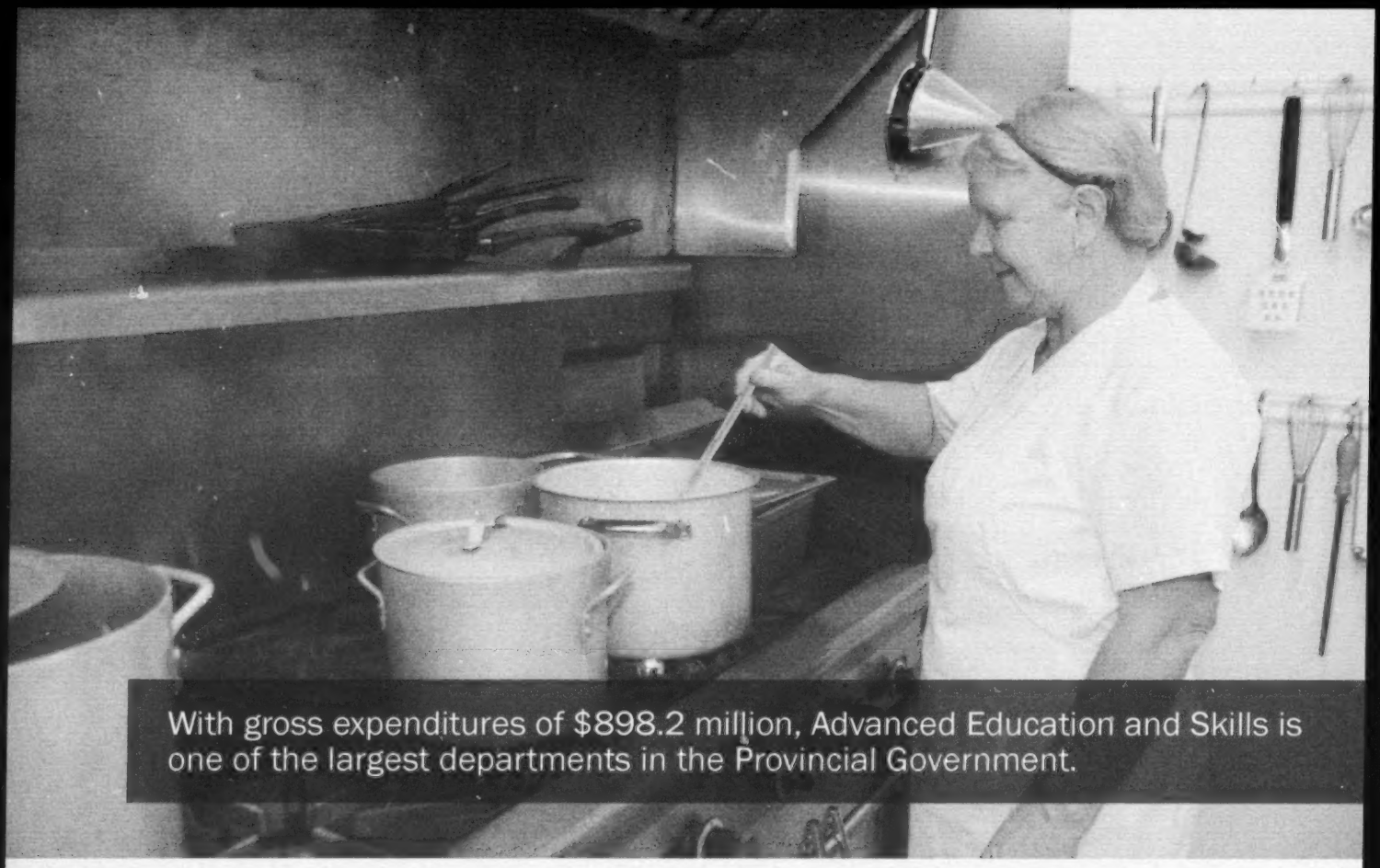
LINES OF BUSINESS

The department fulfills its mandate through the following lines of business:

1. Employment supports and career services - (such as career counseling, wage subsidies, apprenticeship supports, job searching, pre-employment readiness and training and 'up-skilling')
2. Income supports and basic benefits - (such as monthly benefits, earning supplements and one-time benefits)
3. Labour market development and immigration - (such as supporting employers with recruitment and retention, human resource planning, and providing individuals with labour market information and trend analysis on labour market opportunities)
4. Post-secondary education - (supports to individuals such as training, tuition supports, apprenticeship, trade certification, student financial assistance, student assessment, adult learning and literacy, and support to post-secondary institutions)
5. Policy and program development and leadership on cross-government initiatives - (through development and implementation of strategies and programs to support poverty reduction, inclusion of persons with disabilities, immigration and multiculturalism, literacy skills, workforce development and population growth)

Please refer to the www.aes.gov.nl.ca/ for more details on specific programs, services and cross-government initiatives.

Departmental statistics are also available through the Provincial Government's Open Government initiative at http://open.gov.nl.ca/



With gross expenditures of $898.2 million, Advanced Education and Skills is one of the largest departments in the Provincial Government.

Structure

The Department of Advanced Education and Skills is comprised of the following Branches:

- Community and Social Development
- Corporate Services
- Post-Secondary Education
- Regional Service Delivery
- Workforce Development and Immigration

The Department leads government-wide strategies of the Provincial Government on:

- Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities
- Poverty Reduction
- Population Growth which includes action plans on workforce development as well as immigration and multiculturalism

Staff

Gender	
Males	185 (26%)
Females	539 (74%)
Total	724 (100%)

Urban/Rural

Approximately 52 per cent of our employees are located in offices in the St. John's Census Metropolitan Area (CMA). This includes sites at Confederation Building, Coughlan College at Memorial University, and offices in St. John's and Mount Pearl. The remaining 48 per cent are located in offices throughout the province.

Refer to Appendix A for office locations and Appendix B for contact information.

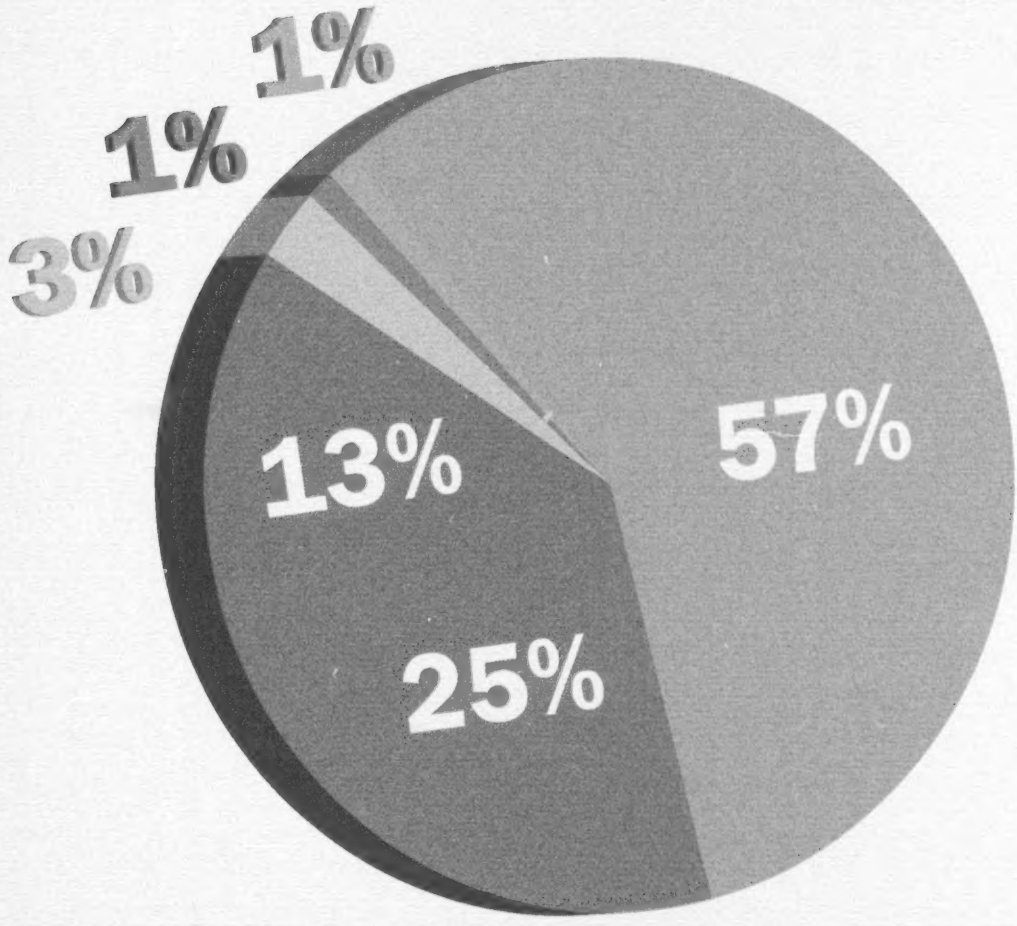
Expenditures

With gross expenditures of $898.2 million, Advanced Education and Skills is one of the largest departments in the Provincial Government.

The greatest expenditure in the department is in support of Advanced Studies at $512 million, followed by Income Support Services at $227 million and Employment and Labour Market Development at $117 million. A summary of expenditures and related revenue can be found on page 30 of this report[1].

Fiscal Year 2013-14
Gross Expenditures $898,155,299

- Advanced Studies $511,995,653
- Income Support Services $226,706,613
- Employment and Labour Market Development $116,813,822
- Service Delivery $21,505,120
- Executive and Support Services $13,008,040
- Youth and Student Services $8,126,051



[1] The Financial Statements are categorized based on the former departmental structure.

Shared Commitments

The Department of Advanced Education and Skills works with many partners to fulfill its mandate and address the strategic directions of the Provincial Government. Throughout the year, funding is provided to community-based organizations to deliver programs that provide services, such as:

- Shelter and accommodations
- Employment interventions
- Re-training opportunities
- Work supports
- Adult basic education
- Literacy and post-secondary education
- Immigrant settlement, and
- Services that support integration and removal of barriers for persons with disabilities

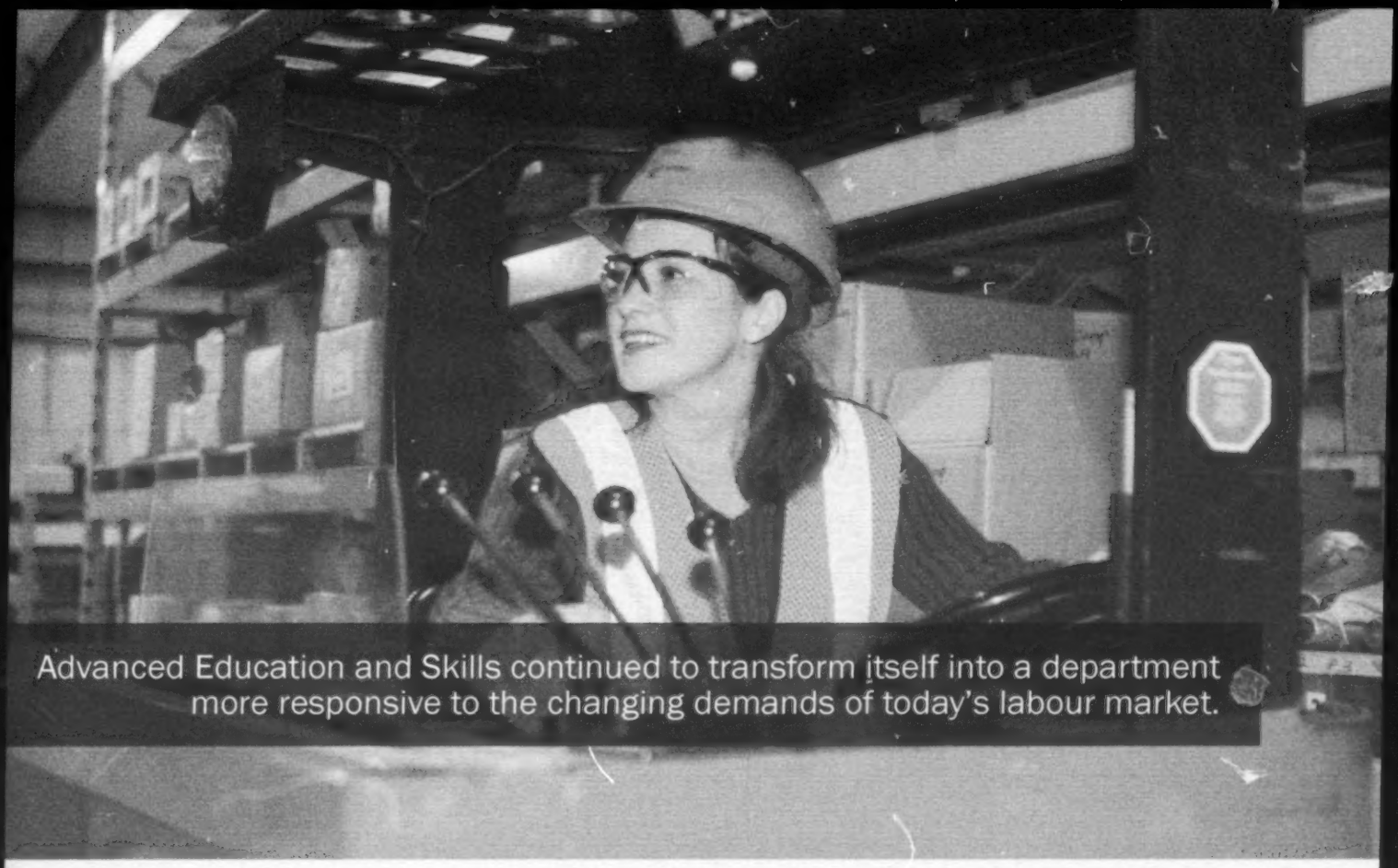
The department leads several horizontal strategies to reduce poverty, increase the inclusion of persons with disabilities, promote the recruitment and retention of immigrants, strengthen the workforce of the province and support population growth.

These complex issues require a partnership approach, both across government departments and with community-based organizations, to support a strong labour market, a skilled and educated population as well as strong community and social supports.

To meet the demands of a competitive economy, the department is also working to support the creation of a skilled and available workforce. This involves working with partners to provide citizens with opportunities to participate.

Partners include:

- Various municipal, provincial and federal government departments and agencies
- Aboriginal governments and organizations
- Business, industry, employer and labour organizations
- Post-secondary and training institutions
- Advisory groups and community-based organizations



Advanced Education and Skills continued to transform itself into a department more responsive to the changing demands of today's labour market.

Highlights and Accomplishments

Over the course of 2013-14 Advanced Education and Skills continued to transform itself into a department more responsive to the changing demands of today's labour market. The department, in collaboration with its partners, undertook a number of important transformative initiatives:

- Instituted one-stop employment services at 28 centres around the province making it easier for people to access employment opportunities.
- Added an on-line suite of training tools and workshops to assist people with job searches and career development supports.
- Expanded employment services in southern Labrador to assist and guide individuals as they explore career, training and employment opportunities.
- Delivered "Sector Skills", a unique project to help employers meet their need for workers and provide individuals with valuable training and work experience.
- Worked with displaced workers affected by the idling of Wabush Scully Iron Ore Mine to identify supports and training options.

- Invested $1.6 million in the Labrador Aboriginal Training Partnership in collaboration with the Federal Government, Nalcor Energy, Innu Nation, Nunatsiavut Government, and NunatuKavut Community Council.
- Transferred the delivery of the Adult Basic Education program to private training institutions and community groups around the province which has resulted in increased accountability measures and improved reporting capabilities.
- Issued over 700 journeyperson certificates - the highest number ever recorded in one year.
- Invested $16 million for employment programs for Persons with Disabilities.
- Hosted "Exploring the Possibilities" in 2013, a skilled trades conference for Women and Youth in the province.
- Collaborated with Memorial University to approve the design phase of a new Core Science Facility.
- Completed an $88.3 million investment in post-secondary infrastructure with the opening of new student residences at Memorial University in St. John's and Grenfell Campus in Corner Brook.
- Continued investment in the Poverty Reduction Strategy of approximately $149 million.
- Reviewed the rental rate structure for people receiving income support benefits based on regional market rates.
- Engaged in negotiation of federal-provincial agreements supporting the design and delivery of labour market programs for employers and individuals.
- Completed province-wide consultations to help inform the development of the provincial Population Growth Strategy which will include a Workforce Development Action Plan.
- Invested in enhancing accessibility of community buildings and community events.

Report on Performance

Addressing strategic issues through three-year goals and 2013-14 objectives.

The *Transparency and Accountability Act* requires departments to prepare and publish an annual report that outlines the completion of annual objectives from the departmental three-year strategic plan. The Department of Advanced Education and Skills has taken an incremental approach with annual objectives that continues over the three-year period of the strategic plan. As a result, this annual report outlines performance by describing progress in achieving its goals over the last three years as well as performance in the final year (2013-14 objectives).

Report at a Glance

Goal 1	By March 31, 2014 the Department of Advanced Education and Skills will have strengthened the continuum of supports and services that maximize participation in the labour market
Goal Indicators	1. Aligned and strengthened labour market programs and services 2. Undertook a review of the Apprenticeship system and supports 3. Improved post-secondary infrastructure, programming and skilled trades training
Goal 2	By March 31, 2014 the Department of Advanced Education and Skills will have strengthened the continuum of services and supports to individuals and families to promote self-reliance and inclusion
Goal Indicators	1. Enhanced employment planning processes for people receiving income support 2. Increased awareness of supports provided by the department 3. Enhanced services in support of cross-departmental strategies on poverty reduction and inclusion for persons with disabilities
Goal 3	By March 31, 2014 the Department of Advanced Education and Skills will have improved the delivery of programs and services.
Goal Indicators	1. Implemented initiatives that support improved program and service delivery 2. Provided more citizen-centred supports and services to the public

Issue One

preparing for a changing labour market

In Newfoundland and Labrador more people are working than ever before. The unemployment rate for 2013 declined by 1.1 per cent to 11.4 per cent, the lowest annual unemployment rate since 1973. Furthermore, the rates between 2011 and 2013 have been the lowest since comparable data have been available. The Provincial Government will strive to maintain the record employment gains and pursue opportunities that support a strong economy over the long term. For the Department of Advanced Education and Skills this means investing in the continued development of a skilled workforce to be more responsive to the province's labour needs. Over the past three years, the department has addressed the Provincial Government's strategic directions relating to higher education and labour market development. The component areas of these strategic directions include: apprenticeship opportunities; labour force participation; labour market information; career, employment and training opportunities; and workplace supports. Illustrative examples of this success are outlined in the following performance results.

Goal 1

Summary of Progress Over the Last Three Years

Goal 1	By March 31, 2014 the Department of Advanced Education and Skills will have strengthened the continuum of supports and services that maximize participation in the labour market.
Measure	Strengthened the continuum of supports and services that maximize participation in the labour market.

3-Year Results for Goal One

1. Aligned and strengthened labour market programs and services

Over the last three years, Advanced Education and Skills has been aligning and strengthening labour market programs and services. The department was re-organized in 2011 by assuming responsibility for post-secondary education and training. As well, with the signing of several labour market agreements, the department's roles and responsibilities for delivering employment-related programs to all clients have increased. The department is now the lead for implementing employment-related programs funded through the Labour Market Development Agreement, as well as provincially-funded employment supports.

Programs were historically delivered based on whether or not an individual was eligible for Employment Insurance; leaving employers and job seekers assessing themselves to determine which program would best meet their needs. Funding decisions were not always aligned with labour market needs. This resulted in a basket of programs that had different funding sources, eligibility criteria, evaluation requirements and delivery mechanisms. In the last three years, several changes were made to align program streams to assist individuals in accessing the required supports for them to attach, or improve attachment, to the labour market.

The department researched all of the common application requirements for employment and training programs and initiated research into a new employment planning model. Programs such as Employment Transitions, for single parents, were expanded to other locations around the province. There was also an increase in the number of skilled immigrants that chose to live and work in the province. The Sector Skills program was created to provide training and on-the-job experience in the retail, food services and cleaner/caretakers/janitorial sectors. This program matched individuals receiving income support benefits with employers around the province which resulted in 58 per cent of participants finding work.

As well, a single point of entry was established for all employment and training programs through the department's 28 offices.

The department has created the Workforce Development Secretariat, which focuses on coordinating labour market policies; aligning labour demand and supply; finding more people to participate in employment through increasing the representation of under-represented groups; highlighting skill shortages and growth sectors in the province; collaborating with employers to recruit and train skilled workers; and attracting labour from outside the province to live and work in Newfoundland and Labrador.

2. Undertook a review of the Apprenticeship system and supports

The shortage of skilled trades workers is one of the most commonly raised challenges facing the labour market in the province. The future needs of the workforce must be factored into planning, to ensure that the recent times of growth and prosperity continue. Responsive trade certification and apprenticeship progression is required to support sustained development. To facilitate this end, the department reviewed the system and supports surrounding apprenticeships.

The department held a forum entitled Apprenticeship, Challenges and Opportunities, that brought together over two hundred people, representing apprentices, journeypersons, entry level students, employers, other industry partners and government agencies, to discuss the apprenticeship system in the province. Services to ensure that apprentices progress through to journeypersons were also developed or expanded, based on review findings. Examples included:

- Establishing a Tracking System to register students enrolled in an apprentice-based college program, so departmental staff can maintain contact and provide support to individuals proceeding through to journeyperson status.
- Expanding the Apprenticeship Wage Subsidy Program, resulting in a 70 per cent increase in employers funded and an 80 per cent increase in the number of apprentices provided with wage subsidies.
- Expanding the Youth Apprenticeship Program to nine high schools.
- Launching the Journeyperson Mentorship Program, which supports employers to hire mentors that can provide more apprentices with supervised hours eligible for journeyperson status.

3. Improved post-secondary infrastructure, programming and skilled trades training

Education and training are the foundation for employment. Providing for training, having responsive programs and investing in infrastructure to support the acquisition of skills and higher learning are key elements to strengthening the continuum of supports and services that maximize participation in the labour market.

Over the past three years, the department has invested an additional $36 million to maintain the tuition freeze at Memorial University and College of the North Atlantic – keeping tuition fees amongst the lowest in the country. According to Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, this province is the most affordable place for students coming from low income families to pursue post-secondary education in Canada[2]. By making post-secondary education more financially accessible to students, the successful completion of programs is more attainable.

The department has also funded major improvements in post-secondary infrastructure, programming and skilled trades training. This includes investments in both programs and infrastructure. Existing university residences, laboratories and academic buildings were renovated at MUN; a 500-bed residence was built at the St. John's campus of the University; a 200-bed residence at Grenfell Campus in Corner Brook was completed; Labrador West received a new College of the North Atlantic (CNA) campus and CNA campuses around the province also received renovations and upgrades.

New and expanded educational programming, research and student services were offered at the Marine Institute. In addition, funding was provided for MUN's Doctor of Psychology program to train psychologists for the province's healthcare system with particular specializations in rural practice. With respect to College of the North Atlantic, funding was provided to support increasing programming that helps relieve labour market pressures. For example, seat capacity was increased in the Medical Laboratory Sciences program to meet current and future labour demands in the health sector.

Additional funding was provided to increase skilled trades training including targeted support for the Labrador Aboriginal Training Partnership to help Aboriginal people with training opportunities in preparation for work on the Lower Churchill Project. Since April 2011, when the department started funding the Apprenticeship Wage Subsidy Program, 970 apprentices have been registered and employed by 570 industry employers, providing required work experience to junior apprentices to progress through the apprenticeship system. Partial funding was also provided to offer a Tower Crane Operator Program delivered at the Operating Engineers College campus in Holyrood.

[2] September 2013 Study: Degrees of Uncertainty - Navigating the Changing Terrain of University Finance.

Objective 2013-14	By March 31, 2014 the department will have implemented initiatives to strengthen the continuum of supports and services that maximize participation in the labour market.
Measure	Implemented initiatives to strengthen the continuum of supports and services that maximize participation in the labour market.

2013-14 Objective Results for Goal 1

1. **Implemented one-stop employment services in existing departmental Employment Centres around the province.**

   The department has been re-organized into five branches with a modified regional delivery structure as well as re-aligned programs and services. In June 2013, the department also assumed responsibility for delivering all employment services throughout the province. This move provided a flexible and accessible one-stop system, ensuring effective and responsive services. Staff can better assist with career planning; setting career goals; providing employment counselling, labour market information, job search, resume writing, interview preparation; and identifying services and programs that support employment goals. Under a new model of one program and one application form, departmental employees assess clients and match job seekers and employers. Those wanting work experience, education subsidies or employment-readiness supports can now come in to one of 28 offices, call or click on the website and inquire about supports to strengthen their labour market attachment. Under the new Employment Centre Model, an individual does not need to understand their eligibility requirements, or navigate a complex web of programs, offered by several agencies.

2. **Commenced implementation of recommendations from the ongoing Apprenticeship System review to advance apprenticeship opportunities.**

   Several reviews of apprenticeship supports have been completed or are ongoing, in order to provide additional skilled trades workers in the province to meet labour market demand. Following up on recommendations, the department carried out the following activities:

   - Continued with initiatives to integrate apprenticeship staff with other regional staff to enhance services for apprentices.
   - Posted the apprenticeship advanced-level training schedule on the departmental website so that employers and apprentices now have better access to details such as block training types being offered, training dates and locations and can plan ahead for upcoming training.
   - Increased funding for apprenticeship training, post journeyperson block training, and other specialized training.
   - Made significant progress in finalizing the Atlantic Workforce Partnership (AWP) agreement which includes the Atlantic Apprenticeship Harmonization project. This is an innovative, regional approach to harmonize apprenticeship training and will assist in ensuring Newfoundland and Labrador

continues to meet the growing demand for skilled labour.

- Conducted a survey during the 2013-14 school year with administration and faculty of the nine participating schools for the Youth Apprenticeship Pilot Program. The feedback received was included as part of the recommendations in the program report.
- Continued work on Accreditation, Study Guides, Curriculum Development, Recognition of Prior Learning and Block Exams to ensure apprentices receive educational training that meets apprenticeship standards. For example, the department rolled out a program to identify, assess and recognize learning acquired through previous experience or formal training. New apprentices can shorten the time required to attain second-year status and to complete their apprenticeship term. The program includes training for assessors, and resource material for apprentices, division staff and assessors.
- Updated Study Guides for specific trades to provide a guide to apprentices who are preparing to write the interprovincial journeyperson exams. Thirty (30) guides were updated based on the most recently released Provincial Plans of Training.

3. Led the development of a government-wide workforce development strategy.

In 2013-14, Advanced Education and Skills, through the Workforce Development Secretariat, led the research and policy analysis to inform a Workforce Development Action Plan. Preparation of an Action Plan is underway and anticipated for release in late 2014 or early 2015 as part of a larger population growth strategy. The plan will help the province respond to the needs of the workforce by attracting more expatriates and newcomers; developing the skills of individuals; addressing barriers to employment; creating more jobs; responding to changing economic conditions and supporting families. This plan was informed by province-wide consultations on population growth held in 2013, as both are inter-connected.

4. Continued Investments in post-secondary infrastructure and programming.

The department has continued to invest in post-secondary education. During 2013-14 over $20.0 million was invested to complete new residences and upgrade existing residences at Memorial University. In September 2013 the first of two residence towers in St. John's was opened for student accommodation. The second tower opened in January, 2014. The new residence at Grenfell Campus also opened in September 2013.

A total of $11.0 million was invested in various maintenance projects at campuses of College of the North Atlantic and Memorial University. College of the North Atlantic was also provided with $2.0 million to further modernize shop facilities.

MUN's Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science's $1 million facility expansion was continued in the priority areas of ocean, arctic and offshore energy, to support major project development and facilitate private-sector/industry partnerships. As well, additional support was provided to increase enrolment capacity, international recruitment and co-operative placement services in the faculty.

The Marine Institute received $2.0 million in base funding for new and expanded educational programming, research as well as student services for continued growth in the oceans sector.

5. Enhanced accessibility to government-subsidized labour market initiatives.

Previously, wage subsidy programs were designed based on funding source and eligibility; and whether or not an individual was eligible for Employment Insurance. This left employers and job seekers trying to assess themselves against eligibility criteria to determine which program would best meet their needs.

Accessibility has been improved through program alignments and the creation of one wage subsidy program (JobsNL), one Student Summer Employment Program (SEP) and one tuition / training support program (Skills Development) for various types of training. As an illustration, four separate wage subsidy programs have been combined into one new program called JobsNL, which is focused on creating employment opportunities. The program provides funding to employers to subsidize the salaries of potential employees, which meet the needs of both, by providing human resources to employers and work experience for job seekers. The JobsNL program gives priority to the hiring of an individual who is receiving income support benefits, has a disability, is unemployed, eligible for Employment Insurance or is a recent post-secondary graduate. Priority for funding may also be given to high-demand occupations and sectors identified by the Department of Advanced Education and Skills. In the first year, over 1,000 wage subsidy applications were assessed and approved.

Issue Two

providing access to a continuum of supports

The Provincial Government aspires to build a more fair and just society. Fairness means making adjustments to compensate for the factors that would otherwise leave some people excluded from all the opportunities and benefits that are available. The individuals accessing services from the Department of Advanced Education and Skills can be anywhere along a path of self-reliance, whether it is seeking basic living supports, becoming more self-sufficient by pursuing post-secondary education and employment or wanting full inclusion in society.

Department-led initiatives such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy take a long-term approach to the complex issue of preventing, reducing and alleviating poverty, which include strengthening the social safety net. The Inclusion Strategy also provides improved processes, policies and supports that enable persons with disabilities to participate in all aspects of society.

Over the past three years, the department has addressed the Provincial Government's strategic directions relating to inclusion of persons with disabilities, labour market and poverty reduction. These directions were addressed through the development and continuation of initiatives that support individuals in achieving self-reliance and inclusion including the removal of disincentives to employment. Illustrative examples of this success are outlined in the following performance results.

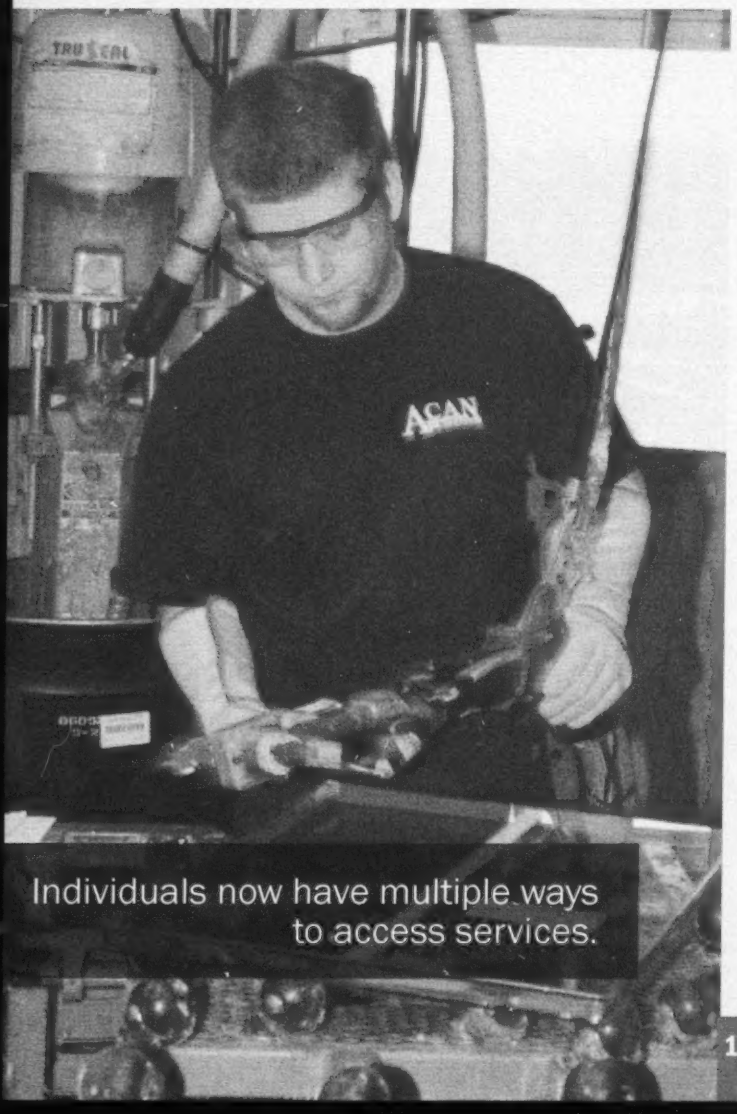
Goal 2
Summary of Progress Over the Last Three Years

Goal 2	By March 31, 2014 the Department of Advanced Education and Skills will have strengthened the continuum of services and supports to individuals and families to promote self-reliance and inclusion.
Measure	Strengthened the continuum of services and supports to individuals and families to promote self-reliance and inclusion.

3-Year Results for Goal Two

1. Enhanced employment planning processes for people receiving income support

Previously, individuals receiving income support benefits were not targeted to receive employment planning supports unless they sought out services. Over the past three years, the department's approach to improving employment planning has evolved. This improvement began with researching common screening tools and approaches which resulted in the implementation of an assessment to determine an individual's suitability for employment and training supports that would be inclusive of those receiving income support benefits. As a result, an Employment Training and Assessment (ETA) approach was developed. The ETA gathers the individual's views on his/her interests and employment readiness. The assessment results serve to connect individuals to the broader range of services and benefits that the department offers. It also allows the department to focus on individuals who require more intensive supports.



Individuals now have multiple ways to access services.

Individuals now have multiple ways to access services – they can call / click / come in. In addition, a suite of on-line training tools and employment workshops were introduced to assist people in job searches. Most recently, the department has implemented a new case management system to track where clients are in terms of employment planning. The new system includes an integrated case management function - providing a consistent approach to working with individual clients.

2. Increased awareness of supports provided by the department

Through increased efforts in the last three years to reach out to clients and the general public, awareness of the supports offered by the department has increased. Examples of initiatives undertaken include:

- Presenting to clients, educators, non-profit groups, health agencies and Aboriginal governments on how the cross-departmental Poverty Reduction Strategy has changed programs to make them more responsive.
- Printing and posting an updated Guide to Programs and Services for Individuals and Families. This latest edition provided new and updated information on a variety of supports such as: home modifications to promote independence, and early childhood education bursaries.
- Providing easier transition to the Access Plan drug card and continued drug coverage for former income support clients who became employed.
- Distributing promotional information to single parents and stakeholders about the Earned Income Supplement Benefit (that provides sustained support while transitioning to work) and improved access to web-related information.
- Providing income support clients with information on the benefits of Direct Deposit and filing Income Tax returns.
- Holding community information sessions on the Provincial Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities and promoting inclusive participation at community and business meetings and conferences.
- Designing and distributing new promotional material (inserts and display cards) highlighting specific components of the Student Financial Assistance program.

3. Enhanced services in support of cross-departmental strategies on poverty reduction and inclusion for persons with disabilities

Reducing poverty and promoting inclusion for persons with disabilities in all aspects of society are long term approaches that, among other things, promote self-reliance. The department leads these cross-departmental strategies, and also delivers programs that support the strategies' goals and objectives.

Over the past three years, many advancements were made to support the inclusion strategy, such as:

- Introducing the Accessible Vehicle Funding Program supporting individuals and families to have accessible transportation by modifying their personal vehicles.
- Introducing the Inclusion Grants Program providing grants to community-based groups to make their facilities more accessible; examples include installation of ramps and visual alarms, provision of sign language interpretation and captioning at conferences.
- Providing policy advice that led to the modification of two pieces of provincial legislation to remove existing barriers for persons with disabilities:
    - *The Blind Persons Act* was repealed and the *Service Animal Act* was introduced to ensure that people with various disabilities are able to access accommodations, services or facilities with their service animal.

- *The Powers of Attorney Act* has been amended to remove a barrier that prevented some persons with disabilities from accessing the Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP).

- Providing guidance across government departments on accessibility standards and trends for internet web sites, publications, public meetings, buildings and workplaces.

Over the past three years, the Provincial Government has invested approximately $146 million annually in the Poverty Reduction Strategy, up from $134 million in 2010-11. During that time, the department has collaborated with other departments and agencies to enhance supports in a number of areas such as:

- Funding to construct new public housing and assist low-income private home owners.
- Developing an Adult Dental Health Care Program that increases access to dental services for people who are vulnerable to poverty.
- Expanding the Earned Income Supplement program for working single parents receiving income support benefits.
- Funding for the Family Child Care Initiative which includes grants paid to qualified family child care providers to increase regulated spaces.
- Increasing the funding for the Child Care Services Subsidy to help families with low incomes with the costs of regulated child care.
- Eliminating the requirement for income support clients to apply for Canada Pension Plan benefits at age 60.

Providing access to a continuum of supports
Preparing for a changing labour market
Supporting improvements in the delivery of programs and services
Ministerial Priorities

Objective 2013-14	By March 31, 2014 the department will have implemented initiatives to strengthen the continuum of services and supports to individuals and families to promote self-reliance and inclusion.
Measure	Implemented initiatives to strengthen the continuum of services and supports to individuals and families to promote self-reliance and inclusion.

2013-14 Objective Results for Goal 2

1. Improved emphasis on employment services that assist people with securing employment.

As mentioned previously, the Employment Training and Assessment (ETA) was fully implemented in April 2013. Over 2,400 ETA's were completed in the last fiscal year. Since its inception, approximately 6,000 ETAs have been completed.

A new case management system called Labour Market Programs Support System (LaMPSS) was also implemented in March 2014 which helps integrate the assessment of client need with benefits that support a transition to employment.

During 2013-14, a new process for accessing skills development supports was introduced for individuals. Skills development supports include financial assistance for tuition, course fees, books or costs associated with training. This supports eligible individuals as they pursue the training they need to find employment. The application can be completed online and used to determine eligibility for a range of supports.

2. Developed and implemented a new program to connect unemployed people to employment.

The Sector Skills program was developed in spring and launched during the summer of 2013. The aim of the program is to prepare individuals for specific jobs in sectors where there is a demonstrated demand. The program was offered by College of the North Atlantic in St. John's, Carbonear, Gander, Grand Falls-Windsor, Corner Brook, and Stephenville. 116 registered participants received training and work experience in such sectors as: retail sales, food services and building maintenance. Fifty-eight per cent of registered participants found work.

3. **Published an online, searchable, manual of income supports' policies and procedures.**

In August 2013 the department published a searchable on-line manual of income support policies and procedures at www.aes.gov.nl.ca/policymanual/index.htm

This electronic manual contains policy and procedures for the Income Support Program. It is an operational document to support the decision-making process for staff delivering Income Support benefits. Clients and advocates now have access to this on-line manual which helps to interpret decisions relating to the provision of income support benefits.

4. **Continued investments in poverty reduction.**

The provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy is a comprehensive, integrated and long-term approach to the prevention, reduction and alleviation of poverty. The strategy continues to be a key component in the Provincial Government's overall social and economic approach to ensuring the province meets its full potential and that prosperity is shared. According to the most recent data available, the province now has the second lowest levels of poverty in the country (tied with Saskatchewan), behind only Prince Edward Island.

Under the ongoing strategy, the Provincial Government allocated $149 million in the 2013-14 fiscal year for an array of initiatives. Some examples of initiatives within the purview of the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills are:

- $1.2 million to enhance health benefits for people receiving income support benefits.
- $4.8 million allocated through Newfoundland and Labrador Housing's Supportive Living Program to advance the work of community partners and stakeholders.
- $6.5 million to cover board and lodging supplements for adults with disabilities who live with family

Issue Three

supporting improvements in the delivery of programs and services

The Department of Advanced Education and Skills is continuing to be more responsive to the needs of the people of the province. An integral part of this transformation involves improving the delivery of programs and services. This long term process is fundamental to the department achieving success and is therefore reinforced in the department's six-year mission.

The department delivers a wide spectrum of programs and services that range from helping people get basic living supports when needed, to helping clients move into post-secondary education and training and on to employment. Over the past three years, the department has addressed the Provincial Government's strategic direction relating to service excellence through the development and continuation of initiatives to realign and better coordinate service delivery, utilize technology to improve service delivery and increase awareness and access to supports. Illustrative examples of this success are outlined in the following performance results.

Goal 3

Summary of Progress Over the Last Three Years

Goal 3	By March 31, 2014 the Department of Advanced Education and Skills will have improved the delivery of programs and services.
Measure	Improved the delivery of programs and services.

3-Year Results for Goal Three

1. Implemented initiatives that support improved program and service delivery

Over the past three years, the department has undertaken a series of initiatives to improve program and service delivery.

An employee training plan was developed and implemented as part of the departmental workforce plan. Training was delivered on core competencies, supervisory & leadership skills, Lean (a streamlining method), service excellence and occupational health & safety.

Research was completed on models for transforming service delivery. Public sector and private sector sources were consulted including Governments of Ontario and British Columbia, and Public Service Commissioners; along with private groups such as the Gallup organization and Development Dimensions International. The Lean model was identified as a systematic approach to eliminating waste, so that every step adds value to the client.

The department also introduced the Master Student Financial Assistance Agreement (MSFAA) and Electronic Confirmation of Enrollment (ECE) for students seeking financial support to attend post-secondary institutions. The MSFAA contains the terms and conditions which apply to the repayment of student financial assistance. The agreement is only signed once and is valid for the duration of a student's program of study. ECE is faster and more efficient than the previous paper-based confirmation of enrolment process. ECE allows post-secondary schools to provide on-line confirmation of student full time enrolment to the National Student Loan Service Centre.

The Disability Policy Office purchased a custom-built portable audio system ("Ruby") that enhances audio and supports participation by people who are hard of hearing at meetings and events. This system is available for use across government to make public engagement initiatives more accessible.

The Disability Policy Office has also established a demonstration unit of technical aids used to modify work stations and remove barriers for employees with disabilities.

Consolidation of application services for programs such as the wage subsidies programs and student summer employment programs has allowed for simplification of process and electronic filing of one application form.

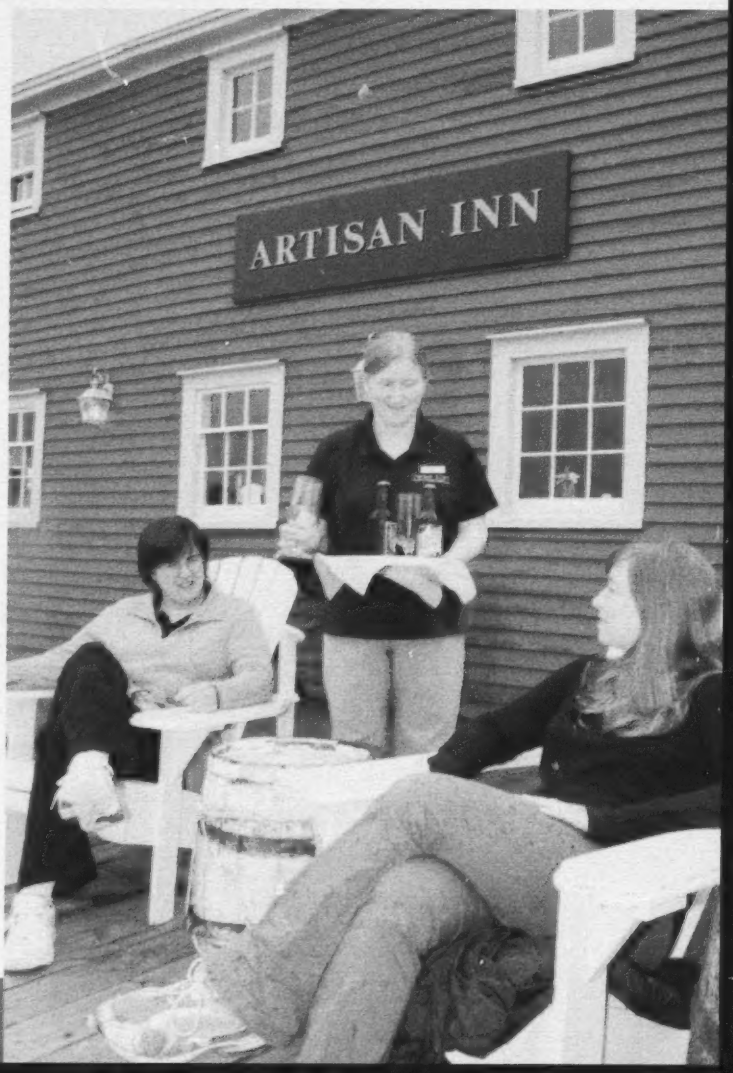
A new system called Labour Market Programs Support System (LaMPSS) was developed and implemented for administering employment programs and supports and providing an integrated case management system. This, along with the previously described Employment Training and Assessment, brings a consistent approach to working with individual clients within a standardized case management model.

Finally, upgrades were made to telephone technology to provide more timely service to clients accessing service via the telephone.

2. Provided more citizen-centred supports and services to the public

During the last three years, the department has identified ways to become more citizen-centred or more focused on citizens' needs and concerns when designing and delivering services. Some examples are:

- Program integration efforts began for student summer employment programs that resulted in one program, with one electronic application.
- Changes to the administration of the Supportive Employment Program now allows the department to serve more clients, to allocate more resources to more people and to reduce administrative burden for staff. Funding is now provided directly to an employment corporation in the form of a grant that is based on the number of clients requiring services and costs for the corporation to complete the assessment eligibility and to manage the service.
- The Master Student Financial Assistance Agreement contains the terms and conditions which apply to the repayment of student financial assistance. The agreement is only signed once and is valid for the duration of a student's program of study.
- With respect to student financial assistance:
  - Electronic Confirmation of Enrollment allows post-secondary schools to provide on-line confirmation of student full-time enrolment.
  - The Repayment Assistance Program makes it easier for students to manage debt by setting their repayments at a level that they can reasonably afford and limiting the overall repayment period.
- During the past three years, over 14,000 individuals and employers registered for www.SMARTFORCENL.ca to participate in online professional development and workplace learning opportunities. A total of 33,000 online courses were completed.
- On-line training courses are provided for apprentices in the Construction Electrical trade, allowing them to stay in their own communities while completing the technical portion of their training.
- As mentioned previously, more convenience is provided to clients completing the Employment Training and Assessment - they can now call / click / come in.



Objective 2013-14	By March 31, 2014 the department will have improved the delivery of programs and services.
Measure	Improved the delivery of programs and services.

2013-14 Objective Results for Goal 3

1. Introduced on-line workshops to assist individuals with their career and employment planning process.

Not all individuals are able to visit provincial Employment Centres and often times prefer to use web-based services in the comfort of their own home or business.

In July 2013, a suite of new training tools and workshops to assist job seekers and employers became available online at www.aes.gov.nl.ca.

Workshops for job seekers include: overview of departmental services and benefits; career planning process; labour market information; job search process and methods; skills assessment; employment readiness; and job maintenance.

Workshops for employers include: labour market information; Human Resources fundamentals; engaging Gen-Y; alternative compensation solutions; compensation; day-to-day performance management; the hiring process; social media and your employees/business; as well as employee and business succession.

Since the fall of 2013, when these on-line workshops became available, approximately 3,000 individual and employer workshops have been completed.

2. Expanded employment services available in Labrador.

During 2013-14, there was a renewed focus on delivering employment services in Labrador. Historically, the department primarily offered in-person income support services in communities in coastal Labrador. Staff have now been trained to focus on providing employment services in coastal Labrador and a Career Development Specialist has been hired in Mary's Harbour to service the south east coast. Staff now advise clients on the full suite of programs and services offered by the department as they explore career, training and employment opportunities.

To that end, approximately 40 individuals have been counseled in areas such as: job searches, resume writing, identification of training opportunities, and applying for assistance or employment. In addition, the department has contracted with NunatuKavut Community Council to create a profile of the labour force from Cartwright to Lodge Bay.

3. Supported the improved delivery of the Adult Basic Education program.

In July 2013, contracts were awarded for the delivery of the provincial Adult Basic Education program. In September 2013, four private training institutions began delivery of ABE to learners in all 15 communities where it had previously been offered by College of the North Atlantic. While ABE program curriculum remains the same, the change in delivery has resulted in increased accountability measures at all delivery sites (i.e. tender requirements bring consistency and clear expectations to providers with more rigorous monitoring and reporting processes). Changes will result in enhanced data integrity, improved reporting capabilities and will support the development of student retention, progression and successful completion indicators.

Additionally, the new delivery model has resulted in the development of a standardized approach to the assessment and approval of applications for ABE delivery and a consistent approach to funding ABE students.

Opportunities and Challenges

The focus of the Department of Advanced Education and Skills in the coming year is outlined in a new three-year strategic plan that was published in June 2014. In keeping with that plan, the department will work to improve the supports it provides to connect workers with employers while supporting a post-secondary education system that is responsive to the needs of individuals and industry. In addition, the department will continue to work with its partners to remove barriers that individuals and families face so they can participate more fully in social and economic opportunities. In doing so, the department will continue to make progress in addressing the strategic directions of the Provincial Government.

The department faces a number of challenges in the coming year including:

- Ongoing implementation of department restructuring to promote efficient and effective service delivery.
- Addressing the increasing demand for skilled labour coming from major projects.
- Finding innovative solutions for matching growing job opportunities with underrepresented groups, as a result of demographic change.

At the same time there are real opportunities to move forward in achieving the department's strategic goals and objectives including:

- Implementing a Workforce Development Action Plan in conjunction with a Population Growth Strategy to capitalize on the skills of the people in the province, maximize their economic potential and recruit more newcomers.
- Working with employers to utilize an "Express Entry" immigrant recruitment model to deal with labour shortages and help fill open jobs for which there are no available Canadian workers.
- Releasing the Literacy and Essential Skills Action Plan that recognizes literacy as essential for further education and securing and maintaining employment.
- Launching the Inclusion Strategy's Action Plan that focusses on removing and preventing barriers so that people can participate more fully in the life of the province.
- Releasing a revised labour market forecast to help identify job opportunities that will exist.
- Modifying the Income Support program to improve emphasis on providing recipients with enhanced employment services.
- Beginning the process of eliminating provincial student loans and replace them with upfront grants.
- Maintaining the tuition freeze for students attending Memorial University and College of the North Atlantic, making public post-secondary education more accessible and affordable.
- Developing the Poverty Reduction Strategy's second action plan in consultation with community partners that builds on the successes of the strategy to date.

The department will continue to work with its partners to remove barriers that individuals and families face so they can participate more fully in social and economic opportunities.

Financial Statements

Summary of Expenditure and Related Revenue for the Year Ended March 31, 2014 (unaudited)

		Actual Expenditure $	Amended Budget $	Original Budget $
Executive and Support Services				
1.1.01	Minister's Office	451,630	462,000	341,700
	Less Revenue	0	0	0
1.2.01	Executive Support	1,323,129	1,359,900	1,378,200
1.2.02	Administrative Support	6,502,489	6,669,400	6,272,300
	Less Revenue	(567,360)	(20,000)	(20,000)
1.2.03	Program Development & Planning	4,730,792	4,806,500	4,723,600
	Less Revenue	0	0	0
Service Delivery				
2.1.01	Client Services	21,505,120	21,984,000	21,514,500
	Less Revenue	0	0	0

Summary of Expenditure and Related Revenue for the Year Ended March 31, 2014 (unaudited)

		Actual Expenditure $	Amended Budget $	Original Budget $
Income Support Services				
3.1.01	Income Support - Social Assistance	226,011,437	226,779,700	226,743,700
	Less Revenue	(4,586,403)	(4,500,000)	(4,500,000)
3.1.02	National Child Benefit Reinvestment	380,740	600,000	600,000
3.1.03	Mother/Baby Nutrition Supplement	314,436	353,900	389,900
Employment and Labour Market Development				
4.1.01	Employment Development Programs	8,501,579	10,176,400	10,176,400
4.1.02	Labour Market Development Agreements Project	85,824,008	104,430,000	104,202,200
	Less Revenue	(96,296,399)	(104,202,200)	(104,202,200)
4.1.03	Labour Market Agreement	9,846,767	10,527,000	10,349,000
	Less Revenue	(4,785,003)	(4,349,000)	(4,349,000)
4.1.04	Labour Market Adjustment Programs	851,128	1,282,400	1,282,400
	Less Revenue	0	(897,700)	(897,700)
4.1.05	Employment Assistance Program for Persons with Disabilities	10,375,423	11,352,200	11,352,200
	Less Revenue	0	(2,703,100)	(2,703,100)
4.1.06	Case Management System Development	4,487,421	4,500,000	4,500,000
	Less Revenue	0	0	0
Youth and Student Services				
5.1.01	Youth and Student Services	8,126,051	9,924,600	9,960,400
Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism				
6.1.01	Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism	927,496	1,016,700	1,087,700
	Less Revenue	(257,992)	(130,000)	(130,000)
Advanced Studies				
7.1.01	Apprenticeship and Trades Certification	11,292,131	14,750,800	14,806,000
	Less Revenue	(6,890,016)	(7,095,100)	(7,095,100)
7.1.02	Adult Learning & Literacy	4,004,754	5,539,100	5,056,700
	Less Revenue	0	(400,000)	(400,000)
7.1.03	Institutional Services	957,854	979,600	924,300
	Less Revenue	(4,100)	(51,000)	(51,000)
7.1.04	Atlantic Veterinary College	1,238,750	1,238,800	1,238,800
7.1.05	Career Awards Program	21,424	21,500	0
7.2.01	Memorial University- Operations	332,961,813	333,402,900	330,964,800
	Less Revenue	(558,981)	(1,000,000)	(1,000,000)

Summary of Expenditure and Related Revenue for the Year Ended March 31, 2014 (unaudited)

		Actual Expenditure $	Amended Budget $	Original Budget $
7.2.02	Memorial University- Physical Plant & Equipment	36,305,110	40,756,600	40,756,600
	Less Revenue	(2,574,252)	0	0
7.3.01	College of the North Atlantic- Operations	77,338,515	82,365,300	82,194,400
	Less Revenue	(17,543,046)	(23,412,400)	(23,412,400)
7.3.02	College of the North Atlantic- Physical Plant & Equipment	5,003,642	5,409,000	5,409,000
	Less Revenue	0	0	0
7.4.01	Student Financial Services- Administration	1,830,990	1,908,100	1,843,300
	Less Revenue	(951,319)	(1,040,000)	(1,040,000)
7.4.02	Scholarships	122,910	123,800	123,800
7.4.03	NL Student Loans Program	29,917,760	30,022,500	29,997,500
	Less Revenue	(1,666,531)	(1,300,000)	(1,300,000)
7.5.01	Training Programs	7,000,000	7,000,000	7,000,000
	Less Revenue	(7,014,769)	(7,000,000)	(7,000,000)
	Total Gross Expenditures	**898,155,299**	**939,742,700**	**935,189,400**
	Total Revenue	**(143,696,171)**	**(158,100,500)**	**(158,100,500)**
	Total Net Expenditures	**754,459,128**	**781,642,200**	**777,088,900**

Expenditure and revenue figures are unaudited and based on public information from the Report on the Program Expenditures and Revenues of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the year ended March 31, 2014. Audited financial statements are a requirement at the government level and are made public through the Public Accounts process; however, Advanced Education and Skills is not required to provide a separate audited financial statement.

Appendices

Appendix A: Map of Advanced Education and Skills Office Locations

Appendix B: Contact Information

Appendix C: Public Entities

Appendix A: Office Locations

Appendix B: Contacts

Further information about the services offered by the Department of Advanced Education and Skills may be obtained from the department's web site at www.gov.nl.ca/aes or Advanced Education and Skills – Confederation Building, 3rd Floor, West Block, P.O. Box 8700; St. John's, NL, A1B 4J6; Telephone: (709) 729-2480.

To access **career, employment and labour market information**, please call the Labour Market and Career Information Hotline at 1-800-563-6600, in St. John's (709) 729-6600 or visit www.LMIworks.nl.ca.

To access the **immigration and multiculturalism information** call (709) 729-5847 or visit www.nlimmigration.ca.

To access the **Disability Policy Office** call toll free 1-888-729-6279; in St. John's (709) 729-6279 or TTY: 1-888-729-5440.

To access **Student Aid Services** contact Main Office - St. John's toll free at 1-888-657-0800; local (709)729-5829; or visit www.aes.gov.nl.ca/studentaid

To access **Apprenticeship and Certification Services** contact Main Office - Mount Pearl toll free at 1-877-771-3737; or local (709)729-2729

To access **Adult Basic Education and Adult Literacy Services** contact 1-888-670-1133 or (709)729-1738.

Regional Services:

Avalon

- All Income Support offices in the Avalon Region can be reached at (709)729-7888 or toll-free at: 1-877-729-7888; TTY: 1-888-380-2299
- Apprenticeship and Certification, Topsail Road (709) 729-2729

Central

- All Income Support offices in the Central Region can be reached toll-free at: 1-888-632-4555; TTY: 1-877-292-4205
- Apprenticeship and Certification, Grand Falls-Windsor (709) 292-4215; Clarenville (709) 466-3982

Western

- All Income Support offices in the Western Region can be reached toll-free at: 1-866-417-4753; TTY: 1-888-445-8585
- Apprenticeship and Certification, Corner Brook (709) 637-2366

Labrador

- All offices in the Labrador Region can be reached toll-free at: 1-888-773-9311; TTY: 1-866-443-4046
- Apprenticeship and Certification, Happy Valley-Goose Bay (709) 896-6348

Appendix C: Public Entities

The following public entities reported through the Minister and prepared separate annual reports in 2013-14:

- Memorial University of Newfoundland
- College of the North Atlantic
- Newfoundland Labrador Housing Corporation
- Student Loan Corporation of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Private Training Corporation
- Memorial University Pension Plan
- Provincial Apprenticeship and Certification Board
- Student Financial Assistance Appeals Board
- Income and Employment Support Appeal Board
- Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities.
- The Council on Higher Education has not been active in recent years; however, there are plans to revive this entity as the department moves forward. At that time, this entity will be subject to the planning and reporting requirements of the *Transparency and Accountability Act*

Copyright © Department of Advanced Education and Skills
ISBN: 978-1-55146-534-0

For additional copies of this document please contact:
Department of Advanced Education and Skills
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, NL A1B 4J6 Canada
Phone: 1-709-729-0494 Fax: 1-709-729-5560

Available in alternate formats, upon request.

Newfoundland
Labrador

This page intentionally blank for double sided printing